

The *Kommerkiarios*, the *Apotheke*, the *Dromos*, the *Vardarios*, and *The West**

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Among the many problems besetting the study of Middle Byzantine economic history are those concerning adjustments to the partial demonetisation of transactions indicated by the fall-off in the numismatic record (of excavations, hoards, and stray finds) for the seventh to ninth centuries, and the origins of a subsequent remonetisation.¹ The administrative systems through which the Middle Byzantine state met its various needs during this period, and the evolution of such systems in response to economic changes (often assumed to be of the state's own making), have recently attracted attention, a development stimulated by the enrichment and re-ordering of the sigillographic record.²

It is proposed here to address again the problem of the interpretation of several imperfectly understood bureaucratic terms, titles of officials, and organisations, recorded on lead seals, most of which, it has already nevertheless been recognised, have some relevance to Middle Byzantine economic history. The aim is to

* The origin of this note is in the first part of my forthcoming edition of the Byzantine and Frankish seals from the excavations of Corinth; in commentaries upon eight seals of *kommerkiarioi* which outgrew their place in the study of the first group of seals (some 200), and which fit together thematically. It has benefitted from the observations of John Haldon, Anthony Bryer, and Chris Wickham. I would like to acknowledge the support which the research received from Corinth Excavations, under their director Charles K. Williams II, the H.H. Wingate Foundation, and the Dumbarton Oaks Institute. For abbreviations, see the bibliography at the end of this article.

1. See now *La cultura bizantina: oggetti e messaggio. Moneta ed economia* (Rome 1986), the contributions of Grierson, Morrisson, Durlat, and Kazhdan; Hendy, section 7, (iv) & (v), and 619 sq.

2. The crucial events in the history of Byzantine sigillography in this respect have been the publication of Zacos-Veglery, in particular ch. II, 1/1 129-363 ('Dated seals of *Kommerkiarioi*'), and Laurent, II.

identify an administrative logic connecting several institutions and offices in their evolution over several centuries of economic and political changes, drawing heavily upon advances made recently in Byzantine studies, the research underlying which is taken as 'given' for present purposes. But it must be admitted at the outset that the sigillographic record is an incomplete puzzle which could yet be reassembled in another way.

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Meagre as the textual references to the Middle Byzantine Kommerkiarios are, historians would probably always have concluded, without access to other kinds of evidence, that these officials simply taxed trade. Clear textual references to the Middle Byzantine Kommerkiarios are lacking before the end of the ninth century, when they start to appear in references to the tolls levied upon foreign traders' movements and transactions. The Kommerkiarioi are recorded at this time also as senior officials of the *Genikon Logothesion*, the department of state which dealt mainly with the land- and hearth-taxes and the associated fixed charges upon fiscal units.³ *Kommerkion* was the usual name for a tax *ad valorem* of 10% on transactions and a charge upon the circulation of goods, mentioned in the sources from the eighth century onwards.⁴ When however these various references are confronted with the ever-growing number of lead seals of Kommerkiarioi of the mid sixth century onwards, historians tend to detect something more complex than the work of a mere *douanier*.

There is an unresolved debate about the functions of Kommer-

3. See Oikonomides (1972), 313, for the structure of this department of state; *idem*, 113, l.33 for the textual reference of 899 AD to the position of the Kommerkiarios; *idem*, 313 and Hendy, 410-14 for the origins of the Genikon Logothesion in the 7th c.; Harvey, 102-108 for the taxes and charges.

4. See Antoniadis-Bibicou, 97-104; Oikonomides (1992) 242-44.

kiarioi of the late sixth to late eighth/mid ninth centuries,⁵ while there has been no concerted reappraisal of ninth-to-eleventh century developments following Antoniadis-Bibicou's potentially controversial study (1963) of the taxation of trade throughout the Byzantine era. In that study the author envisaged no real change in the functions of Kommerkiarioi from Late Antiquity through the Middle Byzantine era: Kommerkiarioi are, implicitly, commercial agents of the state, collectors of taxes in kind, and engaged in the taxation of trade (circulation and value) at most, if not all, times, a thesis which verges on the ahistorical and has to be qualified, but which has, taken as a whole, been more or less ignored.⁶

Nevertheless the variety of hypotheses about the Kommerkarios which are currently in contention (including Antoniadis-Bibicou's) is stimulating. Historians now envisage Kommerkiarioi in a sixth to late eighth/mid-ninth century phase as commercial agents of the state, but they start from widely differing assumptions about economic conditions during much of that period, and arrive at different conclusions about the precise role of Kommerkiarioi within the administrative system.⁷ It has been assumed that their role then evolved *pari passu* with the gradual demise of the indiction-dating of their seals (late eighth to mid ninth c.). Hendy for instance refers to the problem of 'the obscure process by which the . . . (Kommerkarios) evolved into the simple collector . . . of customs-taxes' at that time.⁸ Oikonomides, referring to this same period of supposed transition, evokes a new phase in which Kommerkiarioi of both provinces *and* cities 'are clearly related

5. See principally Antoniadis-Bibicou, ch. 6; Zacos-Veglery, ch. II and 1592-96; C. Morrisson-W. Seibt, 'Sceaux de commerciaux byzantins du VII^e siècle trouvés à Carthage', *Revue Numismatique*⁶ 24 (1982) 222-41; Hendy, 626-40; C. Morrisson, 'Sceaux inédits de la Collection Henri Seyrig', *CRAI* (1986) 420-35; Oikonomides (1986), *passim*, for a brief presentation of which see the same's 'Commerce et production de la soie à Byzance', *Hommes et richesses dans l'empire byzantin*, I (Paris 1989) 187-92; Haldon, 232-44.

6. Antoniadis-Bibicou, ch. 5-6. The argumentation is unfortunately diffuse, but even the most detailed review of the work, by Lemerle (*Revue Historique* 232 [1964] 225-31) does not engage with this thesis.

7. Hendy, Oikonomides, and Haldon as cited n.5.

8. Hendy, 626, n.308.

to maritime trade, mainly with foreign countries.⁹ Not that anyone has suggested that the practice, or not, of indiction-dating, connected, it is agreed, with the process of tax-farming,¹⁰ is itself the key to any change of role. Tax-farming after all did not cease.¹¹ Certainly the function of the *Kommerkiarios* evolved, but the nature and extent of a change of role *ca.* 800 remain open to question.

If one accepts the arguments and evidence of Antoniadis-Bibicou and Hendy about the importance of barter and the low level of monetisation during much of the Middle Byzantine period in most parts of the Byzantine world;¹² if one also accepts that the Middle Byzantine land-tax was for a long period mainly raised in kind, (as indeed it had been for much of Late Antiquity);¹³ that compulsory purchase, requisition, and *corvée*, were used to meet the needs of armies and fleets (as they also had been in Late Antiquity);¹⁴ and that the state continued to store grain, whether for redistribution or sale;¹⁵ then both during and after the period (mid seventh to mid ninth centuries) of indiction-dating there were major tasks to be performed, acquiring and in various ways

9. Oikonomides (1986) 48-49.

10. J. Nesbitt, 'Double Names on Early Byzantine lead seals', *DOP* 31 (1977) 111-21; see 115-17.

11. Antoniadis-Bibicou, 143-45. The author imagines that tax-farming stopped in the 10th to mid 11th c., but see Oikonomides (1992) 241-42.

12. Antoniadis-Bibicou, 247-55; Hendy, 554-69; for the closure of provincial bronze-issuing mints in the east in 629-631 AD, *idem*, 417-24; for the virtual disappearance of the bronze coinage from Anatolian cities in the mid 7th c., *idem*, 640-45; for the parameters of low monetisation in Byzantium, *idem*, 299-304; but for another view, N. Oikonomides, 'De l'impôt de distribution à l'impôt de quotité à propos du premier cadastre byzantin', *ZRVI* 26 (1987) 9-19.

13. For clear analyses of the Late Roman origins of the land-tax in kind and the logicity of its Middle Byzantine designation as *συνωνή* (i.e., compulsory purchase: basically some of the techniques used for compulsory purchase were applied to the assessment and levying of the land-tax) see E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, II (Brussels 1949) 200-01 and Haldon, 229-32; for the importance of payment in kind in Late Antiquity and the difficulty of commutation, Hendy, 294-96 and 605-06; for other arguments supporting Middle Byzantine taxation in kind, Antoniadis-Bibicou, 189-99 and 255.

14. See for instance, J. Haldon, *Byzantine Praetorians: an administrative, institutional, and social survey of the Opsikon and Tagmata, c. 580-900* (Bonn 1984) 314-16; Hendy, 607 and 611.

15. J. Haldon, 'Comes horreorum — Komes tes Lamias', *BMGS* 10 (1986) 203-09.

redistributing primary products on behalf of the fisc and of the state in general.

The indiction-dated seals of Kommerkiarioi refer, however allusively, to an institution called the ἀποθήκη τῶν βασιλικῶν κομμερκίων, an institution to which Hendy, Haldon, and Oikonomides, have attributed specialised roles, purveying weapons to the provincial ('thematic') regiments, or silks.¹⁶ But it appears first in Anatolia in the 650s, at the same time as the virtual disappearance of bronze coinage there, not long after the fiscal and bureaucratic reforms within which has been recognised the breakup of the Praetorian Prefecture of the East, whose officials had hitherto assessed and collected taxes there (whether in coin or in kind), at a time when there is no evidence for the *cursus publicus* buying and transporting primary products for the fisc.¹⁷ Assessment for taxation was meanwhile clearly the

16. Zacos-Veglery, 135. For the 'pre-indictional' history of this institution see now Oikonomides (1986) 33-38, and for its specialist functions Oikonomides, Hendy, and Haldon as cited n.5. But Haldon evokes the complexity of such dealings in a demonetising economy, and logically deduces the role of the Apothekai in supplying the military's many material needs (*ibid.*, 239-41).

17. I follow Hendy, 626-45, regarding coin-usage; *ibid.*, 409-14 and 628-29, on the breakup of the Praetorian Prefecture of the East. That part of the *cursus publicus* which dealt in taxes raised in kind was being abolished in the sixth century (*ibid.*, 295-96). Haldon arrives at essentially similar conclusions regarding the breakup of the Prefecture (Haldon, 183-204), but also (*loc. cit.*) proposes that the Prefecture survived as a shadowy co-ordinator of the new fiscal departments with a sustained civil provincial administration, for the purpose of feeding and equipping the military. However the effective test of Middle Byzantine bureaucratic realities, the sigillographic record, now quite large, is negative. There are no seals of this Praetorian Prefect. The Praetorian Prefect of Illyricum becomes on his seal the 'Eparkhos of Thessalonike' (*cf.* Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, nos. 18.18-23), surviving until the constitution of the *thema* of Thessalonike, when he *disappears*. There are no other seals of the Eparkhoi of *provinces* in the E. Mediterranean orbit. An 8th-century Eparkhos of Nicaea is not the governor of a province (Zacos-Veglery, no. 3156), and seals of Eparkhoi without a geographical designation are invariably of Eparkhoi of Constantinople (*e.g.*, Zacos II, no. 328), and anyway take us beyond our period of concern. Only one seal of an ὑπαρχος (the equivalent title) from our period of concern is to be found in the largest relevant collection (Zacos-Veglery, no. 701), but has no geographical designation, so may be of Constantinople. One seal of an *Arkhn* of *Lydia* (*ibid.*, no. 1489: 7th c.) might fall within our period of concern. Haldon himself shows (*op. cit.*, 204, n. 118 and 205, n. 120) that seals of *Anthypatoi* of the 7th to 9th centuries are, with two exceptions of the 9th century, not the seals of 'proconsular' civil provincial governors. We are therefore left with no *group* of seals attributable to civilian provincial governors for a notional Praetorian Prefect to co-ordinate in the mid 7th to mid 9th centuries. Admittedly this is negative argumentation and does not result

business, both then and later, of the διοικηταί, who appear with large multi-provincial briefs during these organisational upheavals, but who thereafter, during the operation of the Apotheke in Anatolia, almost all appear as simple Dioiketai without provincial designations. It looks as if the business of Dioiketai was limited to provincial fiscal surveys before the mid eighth century, when the number of Dioiketai with provincial designations starts to rise in the sigillographic record for Anatolia and the *thema* of Ellas and the Apotheke disappears from both areas (see below).¹⁸

All these developments leave us looking for an organisation which could have handled taxes raised in kind, if not also compulsory purchases of various primary products for the state. The Apotheke and its associated Kommerkiarioi appear in Anatolia when markets would have been shrinking, and levels of monetised exchange falling, even further than they had already since the sixth century; when most tax-payers would have found their chances of accumulating the equivalent of the gold and silver issues ever more reduced. The Dioiketai, Kommerkiarioi, and Apotheke, are the prime candidates for the successor-organisation to that previously provided jointly by the Praetorian Prefecture, the civil administration of the Late Roman provinces, and the *cursus publicus*. These chronological coincidences within the economic sphere are one consideration. Others are certain overlooked geographical, political, and bureaucratic, associations of the Apotheke and the Kommerkiarios.

The case of one of the largest groups of seals of Kommerkiarioi, those of Thessalonike in the eighth century, is interesting as pointing away from specialised commercial functions. Thessalonike was not organised as a *thema* in the eighth century, and its

in an alternative view regarding the existence or absence of civil governors. It is only meant to suggest that the titulature of a 9th-century courtly ceremony used to support the perpetuation of the Prefecture and civil governors (Haldon, 195 and 201), hence the perpetuation of an older set of arrangements for dealing with taxes and compulsory purchases in kind, receives as yet no sigillographic corroboration.

18. For seals of Dioiketai with a multi-provincial brief see Haldon 196-97. Seals of Dioiketai of named provinces are very scarce for the 7th century (e.g., Zacos-Vegler, nos. 1628 and 2290: probably mid to late 7th c.). The majority of seals of this period (mid 7th century onwards) are of 'undesignated' Dioiketai (e.g., Zacos-Vegler, nos. 616, 1439, 1464, 1527, 1528, 1534). There are more such seals of the 8th century.

governor was dealing with pagan Slavonic settlers organised into the *Sklaviniai*, which had their own tribal leaders.¹⁹ There are no grounds for believing that these were yet being armed by Byzantium.²⁰ However they may have been supplying primary products as taxes in kind, as some of them had in the late seventh century to the Sermesianoi, an ethnically mixed group whom the emperor wished to settle as imperial soldiers in Macedonia.²¹ The failure of that particular scheme in the late seventh century, the persistence of the *Sklaviniai*, and the demonetisation of Macedonia, do not suggest that the primary function of *Kommerkiarioi* in eighth-century Macedonia was the sale of imperial monopoly-products. Dealing in taxes in kind was probably therefore the principal ongoing operation of the *Apotheke*-system, whatever special operations it performed (as defined by Haldon, Hendy, and Oikonomides). The *Kommerkiarioi* could thus have supplied the Counts τῆς Λαμίας, like themselves officials of the *Genikon Logothesion* and now identified as directors of Middle Byzantine Constantinople's imperial granaries.²²

The state's principal commercial agents were already called *Kommerkiarioi* in Late Antiquity (the name derived from the Latin *comes commerciorum*). Oikonomides and others have shown that in Late Antiquity some of them controlled, probably 'farmed', the revenues of certain lucrative *loci* of foreign trade. But by the mid seventh century many of the centres of production and trade to which these *Kommerkiarioi* had been attached were within the Caliphate. The *Kommerkiarioi* meanwhile fell back on other kinds of essentially fiscal business.²³ The chrono-

19. See for instance G. Theokharides, *Istoria tēs Makedonias kata tous mesous khronous (285-1354)* (Thessalonike 1980) 179-189.

20. Rather the *Sklaviniai* in general were subject to campaigns of pacification from the mid 7th century onwards; see for instance P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des Miracles de Saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans*, II (Paris 1981) 185-93. For the foundation of the *thema* of Thessalonike in the early 9th century see for convenience Oikonomides (1972) 352.

21. P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des Miracles de Saint Démétrius*, (Paris 1979) cap. 289-94.

22. Haldon, *art. cit.* n.15.

23. For the geography of the operations of Late Antique *Kommerkiarioi*, and the operations themselves, see Oikonomides (1986) 33-38; Morrisson-Seibt, *art. cit.* n.5; Morrisson, *art. cit.* n.5.

logical continuity of their operations through the turbulent decades of the early and mid seventh century is now demonstrated by an edition of the seals of the Exarchate of Africa.²⁴ The Kommerkiarioi effectively continued after the mid seventh century to be commercial and fiscal agents of the state, but with a new significance stemming from economic decline and the retreat from monetised exchange.

Given the pivotal position which these conditions would have bestowed upon an organisation which could evaluate, accept instead of money, buy and redistribute, agricultural and other primary products, and given the likelihood that the Apotheke was that organisation, it is not surprising that the Apotheke or the position of Kommerkiarios are sometimes combined in the indictional phase of the seals with those of other senior officials of the general non-military treasury, the Genikon Logothesion;²⁵ nor, moving probably into the 'post-indictional' phase, is it then surprising that the position is sometimes combined with the office of tax-collector of a fiscal circumscription.²⁶ It is also not surprising to find the position sometimes combined thereafter with that of *Protonotarios*, the senior financial official of the provincial administration;²⁷ or combined with positions in the *Dromos*, the organisation which had come to physically redistribute materials for the state (see below).²⁸ The Byzantine state continued to have a major interest in the acquisition of an agricultural surplus, to feed the court, Constantinople, and the imperial regiments (*tagmata*).²⁹ This interpretation of these connections does not directly affect arguments about the distribution (by sale

24. Morrisson-Seibt, *art. cit.* n.5.

25. See for instance Zacos-Veglery, nos. 195, 197, 203, 204, 232-237 (Genikoi Logothetai of provinces).

26. See for instance Zacos-Veglery, nos. 2103, 2104, 2427: Kommerkiarios-Dioiketes; also B. Pančenko, 'Katalog molivdovulov kolekcii russkago arkheologičeskago instituta v Konstantinopole', *IRAİK* 13 (1908) 78-151, no. 320, seal of a Kommerkiarios and Dioiketes of the Peloponnese (9th c.), interpreted by V. Laurent, *La Collection C. Orghidan* (Paris 1952) no. 259 (note).

27. Dunn, no. 66 (Didymoteikhon: early to mid 9th c.); G. Schlumberger, 'Sceaux byzantins inédits', *idem, Mélanges d'archéologie byzantine*, I (Paris 1895) 199-274, no. 30 (Thessalonike: 10th c.); Nesbitt-Oikonomides, I, 18.43 (Thessalonike: 10th c.).

28. See Hendy, 602-613 for the Dromos as Cursus.

29. Haldon, *art. cit.* n.15 *passim*; *idem, Byzantine Praetorians* (op. cit. n.14) 314.

or otherwise) of weapons, silk, or indeed other imperial monopolies,³⁰ but the implication is that these monopolies were not usually the primary concerns of Kommerkiarioi either during or after the era of indiction-dating.³¹ Nor does the fact that the tax upon commercial exchange had come to be called *kommerkion* indicate that trade was the primary concern of Kommerkiarioi in the seventh to ninth centuries. Rather, when trade was at its lowest ebb, they displaced those officials whose special responsibility it had been, and displaced the older terminology too.³²

If the Kommerkiarioi of the mid seventh to mid ninth centuries were always involved with the taxation of *internal* traffic it is in the following period that some (but not all, as has been suggested or implied) seem to have been assigned to the supervision of the growing trade with foreigners. In the ninth century the monetisation of transactions began gradually to increase as did commercial activity,³³ so eventually altering the balance between the functions attributable to the Kommerkiarios. In the short to medium term he would still have been important as a fiscal agent in many western and northern regions which were being reincorporated after long periods of demonetisation, for instance the Peloponnese in the early ninth century³⁴ and Epeiros (Nikopolis)

30. However Oikonomides's arguments about an empire-wide official commercialisation of silk from the imperial workshops and about far-flung mulberry-plantations in central and eastern Anatolia, Macedonia, and Thrace, in the 7th-9th cc., run into a mass of practical objections, depending upon the region, environmental, political, communicational . . . (see now Haldon as cited n.5).

31. In fact Oikonomides recognises (Oikonomides [1986] 45-46) that several indiction-dated seals referring to Apothekai/Kommerkia *and* to fiscal officials (Logothetai, Dioiketai) or their circumscriptions (Dioikeseis) should be the seals of tax-farmers (who are supposedly also purveying silks to their victims). And Haldon (as cited n.5) gives effect to Hendy's model of the Kommerkiarios as supplier of equipment to the provincial regiments by linking defrayment of the costs to a system of taxation in kind and *corvée*.

32. See Antoniadis-Bibicou, ch. 3-4 for the Early Byzantine terminology of *dekateutai*, *dekatelogoι*, etc., obviously displaced by the Kommerkiarioi themselves.

33. See Harvey, 86-89, for numismatic evidence from archaeological sites, particularly in Greece and the Balkans (putting Corinth into context). See Hendy, 424-26 for the probable operation of a bronze-issuing mint at Thessalonike in the 9th century.

34. See Laurent, *Collection Orghidan* (op. cit. n.26), no. 229: seal of a Kommerkiarios of the Peloponnese, unaccountably dated by Laurent to the 11th c., but in fact of the first half of the 9th.

in the late ninth century.³⁵ But in some of the newer provinces, such as the Peloponnese, the importance of the Kommerkiarios as fiscal agent would soon have been lessened by the growing monetisation of taxation. The petty currency of small-scale transactions was growing there from the mid ninth century,³⁶ and the last seals of Kommerkiarioi of the Peloponnese are of the late ninth to early tenth century, when Peloponnesians were already commuting the obligations of military service.³⁷

The Peloponnese thus joined that group of central or older Middle Byzantine provinces (Thrake, Makedonia, Thrakesion, Opsikion, Optimaton, Voukellarion) for which there is no record of Kommerkiarioi of the *provinces* as such in the sigillographic record after the mid ninth century.³⁸ Instead the later ninth- to mid eleventh-century seals³⁹ are from newer provinces or marine or riverine 'gateways' adjoining the Bulgarian empire — Thessalonike,⁴⁰ Khristoupolis,⁴¹ Develtos,⁴² Dristra⁴³ and Presthlavitz

35. See N. Seibt-W. Seibt, 'Die sphragistischen Quellen zum byzantinischen Thema Nikopolis', *Praktika tou prōtou diethnous symposiou gia tē Nikopolē*, E. Khrysos ed. (Preveza 1987) 327-47, no. 18.

36. See A. Dunn, 'Historical and archaeological indicators of economic change in Middle Byzantine Boeotia and their problems', *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Boeotian Studies* (in press) nn.54-60 for the secondary literature including the debate between Metcalf and Hendy about the degree of monetisation.

37. Dunn, no. 55 (later 9th c.); *supra*, n.34, for a seal of the 9th century wrongly attributed to the 11th; also Schlumberger, 181-82, seal of Theognostos, Kommerkiarios, '12th c.' according to the editor but in fact mid 9th to early 10th-c. — cf. N. Oikonomides, *A collection of dated Byzantine lead seals* (Washington, D.C. 1986) nos. 53, 56, and 57, for iconography and style. For fiscal commutation in the Peloponnese in 921 see N. Oikonomides, 'Caratteri esterni degli atti', *La civiltà bizantina: oggetti e messaggio* (Rome 1991) 27.

38. Laurent, *Collection Orghidan*, no. 223 (Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste', no. 103), seal of a 'Kommerkiarios of the Optimates . . .' is a misreading.

39. I include a couple of seals which can only be assigned to 'the ninth century' as a whole. There are none which have to be assigned to the first half of the century.

40. Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste'; Zacos-Veglery, nos. 2087, 2177, 1840, 2101, 2137, 2503, 3072, 3134; Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, nos. 18.2-3 and 18.36-50. Thessalonike only became a *thema* in the early ninth century.

41. Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste'; Zacos-Veglery, no. 2404; Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 39.5.

42. For the chronological span: Schlumberger, 112-13, nos. 1 and 4 (10th c.); Zacos II, no. 159 (mid 9th to early 10th c.); I. Barnea, 'Sceaux byzantins de Dobroudgea', *Studies in Byzantine sigillography*, N. Oikonomides ed. (Washington, D.C. 1987) 77-88, no. 5 (early to mid 11th c.).

43. Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 65.1.

(both on the Danube),⁴⁴ and the Vardar river;⁴⁵ from an older province just abutting the Bulgarian empire that was frequently exposed during the tenth century to Bulgarian occupation;⁴⁶ from the Black Sea littoral — Kherson,⁴⁷ Tion,⁴⁸ Amisos,⁴⁹ and again Develtos; from new or reconstituted or residual eastern, western, and southern, frontier-provinces — Seleukia,⁵⁰ Antioch,⁵¹ Khaldia,⁵² Sicily (residual in the tenth century),⁵³ Crete,⁵⁴ and Longovardia;⁵⁵ from the straights of Avydos,⁵⁶ from the Mediterranean coast of Asia Minor (Erythrai,

44. *Ibid.*, no. 78.1-3; N. Oikonomides, 'Presthlavitz, the Little Preslav', *Südost-Forschungen* 42 (1983) 1-9, for its location near the mouth of the Danube and for evidence of its role as a centre of Russo-Byzantine exchange.

45. A. Mordtmann, 'Inscriptions byzantines de Thessalonique', *Revue archéologique* n.s. 37 (1879) 193-203: seals of Kosmas, Vardarios, Kommerkiarios ('Vardarios Kommerkiarios?'), and Protonotarios of Thessalonike (201), and of Pardos, Vardarios of Thessalonike (202); G. Schlumberger, 'Sceaux byzantins inédits (cinquième série)', *Revue Numismatique* (1905) 321-354, no. 204: seal of Pardos, Vardarios of Thessalonike. All are dated '10th/11th c.', but on the basis of illustrations can be assigned to the 10th century.

46. Ellas, for which there is one published seal of a Kommerkiarios of our second period: *Schlumberger* 167 (illustrated: 10th c.). For four occupations of Ellas in the 10th century by Bulgars and Magyars see J. Koder-F. Hild, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini I. Hellas und Thessalia* (Vienna 1976) 60, 61, 63, and N. Oikonomides, 'Vardariotes — W. l. nd. r — V. n. nd. r: Hongrois installés dans la vallée du Vardar en 934', *Südost-Forschungen* 32 (1973) 1-8.

47. Zacos II, no. 286 and Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, nos. 82.4-9.

48. Dunn, no. 56.

49. Zacos II, no. 200.

50. Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste': the seal is of the 10th c. (see *Schlumberger* 271, with illustration). See Oikonomides (1972) 350, for Seleukia.

51. Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste' (sceaux non datés). But see *Schlumberger* 312, with illustration: the seal is dateable to ca. 950-1050. For the province see Oikonomides (1972) 354.

52. Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste'; Zacos-Veglery, nos. 1880, 2113(a)-(b), 2235, 2527(a)-(b), 3168; Zacos II, nos. 306 and 357. For the province see Oikonomides (1972) 345. There is a literary reference to a Kommerkiarios of Khaldia (10th-c.) which I owe to the entry 'Kommerkiarios', *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 2, 1141.

53. Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 5.3 (10th c.).

54. Seals of the 10th c. (second half): D. Tsougarakis, 'Some unpublished lead seals concerning Crete', *REB* 48 (1990) 243-46, no. 5; *idem*, 'The Byzantine seals of Crete', *Studies in Byzantine sigillography* 2, 137-52, no. 57 (where previous editions are cited).

55. Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste'. For the province see Oikonomides (1972) 351-52.

56. Zacos-Veglery, nos. 1711, 2172, 2174, 2250.

Attaleia);⁵⁷ and also from the Dromos (see below).

With the exception of Erythrai, which may have been a Byzantine naval station,⁵⁸ these later seals refer to theatres of war (*i.e.*, areas prone to compulsory purchase) or to sites of policed exchange with foreigners (particularly Bulgars, Russians, and Arabs, but at Avydos also the Italians), or to both — in either case of some interest to the Dromos (see below). What we do *not* find are Kommerkiarioi of the supposedly growing markets of the inner, older, provinces, either inland or far from maritime and terrestrial frontiers. It would currently be difficult if not impossible to use the skimpy archaeological record of the older inner provinces essentially in western-Anatolia and European Turkey, to plot the changing level of monetisation of transactions in the Early Middle Ages. But their proximity to Constantinople, where exchange was always monetised, allows one to suppose that remonetisation affected them first, or at least no later than it seems to have affected parts of southern Greece.⁵⁹

In areas of policed exchange some officials (Kommerkiarioi?) would have had an important regulatory role. There was a wide range of banned or regulated exports and imports, subject to con-

57. Zacos II, no. 152 (Erythrai); Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste' (Cyprus and Attaleia). See Schlumberger, 305, with illustration, for the latter: early to mid 11th century. Also A. Szemioth-T. Wasilewski, 'Sceaux byzantins du Musée National de Varsovie. Première partie', *Studia źródłoznawcze* 11 (1966), 1-38, no. 52 (Attaleia; 'second half of the eleventh c.', but rather early to mid 11th c.).

58. Erythrai, whose name survived locally until this century as 'Lythri', had been important in the Roman period. It had a protected harbour, opposite Chios, but no hinterland of its own (*RE* VI, cols. 575-91). It was a suffragan of Ephesus throughout the Middle Byzantine period: J. Darrouzès, *Notitiae episcopatum ecclesiae constantinopolitanae* (Paris 1981) *not.* 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, and 13. It was certainly, like Strovilos, another naval section, oriented by geography towards the sea and away from the interior.

59. For Constantinople see R. Harrison, *Excavations at Sarayhan* I, ch. 12, 'The coins', by M. Hendy, particularly 278-80. The Apotheke of Constantinople, attested in the 7th to 8th cc. (Zacos-Veglery 1/1, Table 21) was perhaps where much primary produce taken in taxation was commercialised or otherwise exchanged. The only useful published coin-series from the older inner provinces, the 1,234 identifiable coins of the years 491-1282 AD from the excavations of Sardis of 1958-1968, indicate a slight revival of the petty currency from the time of Leo V (813-820) onwards, after a period (667-812 AD) for which there are only 5 coins: G. Bates, *Archaeological exploration of Sardis. Monographs 1. Byzantine Coins* (Harvard 1971), 7, Table III.

stant moderation, in the ninth to eleventh centuries in some of which (timber, arboreal products, and iron ore, for instance) a fiscal agent concerned with military and naval needs would also have taken a considerable interest.⁶⁰ So logical connections are detectable between some of the concerns of Kommerkiarioi of the mid seventh to ninth centuries and those implicit in the topography of the ninth- to eleventh-century Kommerkiarioi, despite some functional evolution as taxation began to be remonetised.⁶¹

Then on the basis of stylistic chronology the *seals* of Kommerkiarioi disappear during the concerted movement towards fiscal commutation of the land-tax in the Balkans, and of provisions and materials for armies and fleets in general, which, though never definitive, made great headway in the middle decades of the eleventh century.⁶² Seals of Kommerkiarioi once dated to the 11/12th, 12th, or 12/13th centuries are in no case demonstrably later than the mid eleventh century.⁶³

The Kommerkiarioi did not disappear of course (they are mentioned in agreements, and disputes, with the Italian mercantile republics), but they had lost their pivotal position within provincial fiscal and logistical systems. If we accept Hendy's arguments, which are persuasive, about the relative smallness of the contribution to revenues made by the taxation of trade at the best of times,⁶⁴ then we can understand why the Kommerkiarioi, shorn of their other functions, disappear from the *sigillographic* record — why they were in a sense downgraded even as *commerce* revived.⁶⁵

60. For the control of exports and imports in general see Antoniadis-Bibicou, 50-56. For timber and arboreal products see A. Dunn, 'The exploitation and control of woodland and scrubland in the Byzantine world', *BMGS* 16 (1992) 262-79.

61. The connection between the Kommerkiarioi and the needs of the military would be detectable to the end if a seal of a 'Khartoularios and Kommerkiarios of Presthlavitzza' (Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 78.3) were a seal of a military Khartoularios (for seals of whom see *Laurent* II, nos. 554-78).

62. For fiscal commutation see Hendy, 297 and Harvey, 113-14. For some qualifications see Dunn, *art. cit.* n.61, 262-72.

63. For these seals, published with one exception over one hundred years ago by Schlumberger, listed with their inaccurate dates, see Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste', nos. 129-135.

64. Hendy, 173-175 and 613-18.

* * *

'The West' was a basic subdivision of several civil, fiscal, and military branches of the Middle Byzantine state-apparatus.⁶⁶ The term Δύσις could be used to designate a large group of western provinces, but many of the inscriptions on seals of officials τῆς Δύσεως indicate that the term is not always to be understood in a simple geographical sense. A seal of a Kommerkiarios Δύσεο[ς (καὶ)] Δοραχ[ίου]⁶⁷ differentiates 'The West' from the thema of Dyrrakhion. A seal of a *Kourator* 'of the West' and of Lagouvardia differentiates it from southern Italy,⁶⁸ and a seal of a Kommerkiarios 'of Thessalonike, the West, and the thema of Ellas'⁶⁹ differentiates it from two more major western provinces. 'The West' for these bureaucratic purposes already excluded the provinces of Thrake and Makedonia (central and eastern Thrace).⁷⁰ So if 'The West' were being used on these three seals to mean 'provinces of the west' it would be a strangely residual west (the Peloponnese, Epeiros, eventually Crete . . .) liable to further shrinkage as more seals are found. Alternatively *Dysis* was being used in some part of the administration as bureaucratic shorthand of a kind already familiar. Just as *Apotheke* and *Avydou*⁷¹ acquired special technical meanings by association so could *Dysis*.

A correlation of sigillographic legends suggests an important shorthand usage. Besides a sequence of seals of Kommerkiarioi of the West (of which the old excavations of Corinth provide a

65. Of course there is the problem of the tendency within the élite towards the use of 'private' seals. But other high fiscal officials continued to advertise their functions on their seals (Pronoetai, Anagrapheis, Exisotai . . .), which is hardly surprising given the nature of their business.

66. See now Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, 1-2.

67. Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 12.6 (10th c.).

68. V. Laurent, *Les sceaux byzantins du Médailleur Vatican* (Vatican 1962) no. 111 (1050s).

69. Zacos II, no. 1075 in *apparatu* (first half of the 10th c.).

70. Oikonomides (1972), 341-42.

71. Oikonomides (1992).

previously unrecognised example),⁷² some including named provinces dateable to the early ninth through mid eleventh centuries,⁷³ there is a seal of a 'Khartoularios of the West' of the tenth century,⁷⁴ an official not otherwise attested at that date unless we recognise his title as a shorthand for 'Khartoularios of the Dromos (i.e., *Cursus Publicus*) of the West', who is well attested sigillographically in the late ninth through eleventh centuries.⁷⁵ A 'Khartoularios of the Dromos' is attested in the ninth through mid eleventh centuries too.⁷⁶ It has recently been proposed that the Khartoularios of the West was linked with western fiscal lands known in the twelfth century as the *khartoularata*, which fulfilled a service essential to any *Cursus Publicus*, namely the supply of pack-animals to the state.⁷⁷

The Dromos was the successor of the *Cursus Publicus*, but also controlled the movements of individuals, including foreigners, internal security, and assisted Byzantine diplomatic missions. It was recorded by this name in the mid eighth century, and lead seals are certainly attributable from that time onwards.⁷⁸ The Dromos of the West probably covered all European provinces other than those of central and eastern Thrace (Makedonia and

72. Dunn, no. 58 (previously *Corinth* XII, no. 2715).

73. In approximate chronological order, Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 1.27; *idem* no. 1.25; Zacos II, no. 1075 *in apparatu*; Dunn, no. 58; Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, nos. 1.26, 1.23, 12.6, 1.28, 1.29; Schlumberger, *Mélanges* (op. cit. n.27), no. 80; Schlumberger, 198, no. 1; N. Likhačev, *Istoričeskoe značenie italo-grečeskoj ikonopisi, izobraženija Bogomateri* (St Petersburg 1911) pl. IV/27.

74. Schlumberger, 504, no. 1. Schlumberger was uncertain and suggested a 10th/11th-century dating.

75. In approximate chronological order, Laurent II, no. 453; *idem*, nos. 457, 454, 455, 456; Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 1.11; Zacos II, no. 825; Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 1.6; Laurent II, nos. 458, 459, 460; Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 1.8.

76. In approximate chronological order, Laurent II, nos. 450, 453, 451, 452.

77. Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 1.5 (commentary).

78. For the functions of the Dromos see in general L. Bréhier, *Les institutions de l'empire byzantin* (2 Paris 1970) 244-45 and 263-68; for the sigillographic data, which truly complements the texts, Laurent II, 195-262; for the Late Antique and Byzantine *Cursus Publicus* see Hendy, 294-96 and 602-613. The article by D. Miller, 'The logothete of the Drome in the Middle Byzantine period', *Byzantion* 36 (1966) 438-70, does not help this discussion. See Laurent II, nos. 409 *sq.*, 467, and 473, for origins and structure.

Thrake).⁷⁹ The Dromos was a central service with its own agents.⁸⁰ Therefore a high official 'of the Dromos of the West' could have had a multiprovincial brief. The Dromos will have operated in most provinces, 'eastern' and 'western' (Thrake and Strymon for instance).⁸¹

What would Kommerkiarioi have done for the Dromos, and how are combinations of 'The West' with the 'commerciariate' of particular provinces to be interpreted?

Officials of the *Logothetes tou Dromou* were the only ones allowed by an imperial charter of the year 992 to deal with the affairs of Venetian merchants, including the approval, valuation, and taxation, of their cargoes.⁸² The officials whose job this was would in principal have been Kommerkiarioi.⁸³ It was the Logothetes tou Dromou, Stylianos Zaoutzes, who had in 893 established Kommerkiarioi at Thessalonike (*i.e.*, in 'The West') to levy tolls from Bulgarian merchants (the decision which provided the Bulgarian Tsar Symeon with his *casus belli*).⁸⁴ It would therefore seem that Kommerkiarioi could be attached to the Dromos. At least four seals of Kommerkiarioi 'of the West' effectively pre-date the document of 992, dating as far back as the

79. For the exclusion of these areas from 'The West' see Oikonomides (1972) 341-42. See Laurent II, no. 466 for a Middle Byzantine seal of the 'Eastern Dromos'. There is in fact a seal of the 'Dromos of Thrake' (see n.81 below).

80. Seals of the clearly provincial officials of the Dromos are conveniently assembled in B. Koutava-Delivoria, 'Les ΟΞΕΑ et les fonctionnaires nommés ΤΩΝ ΟΞΕΩΝ: les sceaux et les étoffes pourpres de soie après le 9^e siècle', *BZ* 82 (1989) 177-90, Tableau 2, nos. 65-70.

81. For Thrake see Schlumberger, 123: seal of the 'Ek Prosopou of the Dromos of Thrake' (mid 11th c.?). For Strymon there is a reference to the δρόμος τῶν κουντούρων, a route on the south side of Mt Pangaion in the province of Strymon on the line of the natural route between Constantinople and Thessalonike, which would seem to have been named after the *kountoura*, the dock-tailed horses of the Dromos, for which see Michael Psellos, 'Εἰς τὴν φωνὴν τὴν λέγουσαν, Σήμερον τὰ ἅγια κόντουρα', *Μεσαιωνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, ed. K. Sathas (Paris 1876) E', 532-33. For the reference to Pangaion see *Archives de l'Athos* XVI. *Actes d'Iviron* II, eds. J. Lefort-N. Oikonomides-D. Papachryssanthou (Paris 1990) no. 52 (1104 AD), l.200.

82. Bréhier, *op. cit.* n.78, 245. For the charter see A. Pertusi, 'Venezia e Bisanzio nel secolo XI', *La Venezia del mille* (Florence 1965) 117-60: Appendice (155-60).

83. See Antoniadis-Bibicou, 157-91 for these activities.

84. G. Bratianu, 'Le commerce bulgare dans l'empire byzantin et le monopole de l'empereur Leon VI à Thessalonique', *Sbornik Nikov* (Sofia 1940), 30-36; Antoniadis-Bibicou, 143-44.

ninth century.⁸⁵ However the officials who dealt with the new groups of foreign merchants are likely to have been those Kommerkiarioi who are associated sigillographically with a named commercial 'station' (for instance Avydos and Didymoteikhon), while Kommerkiarioi 'of the West' are likely to have remained fiscal agents of the kind already discussed in connection with the Apotheke, and in connection with Kommerkiarioi operating in theatres of war and frontier-provinces in the ninth to early eleventh centuries.

We need more seals relating to these various aspects of the administration to be sure of having detected meaningful patterns, but assuming that the chronology of presence and absence of offices and functions already detectable has some basis in administrative realities, it is reasonable to propose that an aspect of the rise of the Dromos during the eighth century (v.s.) was its gradual supplanting of the Apotheke-system. The 'Apotheke of the imperial kommerkia' (the anonymous formula which had replaced, on seals, the seventh-century references to individual or joint Kommerkiarioi) disappears throughout Anatolia by the mid eighth century.⁸⁶ Meanwhile in the central, eastern, and southern Balkans, apart from the district of Thessalonike and the small early province of Ellas, there had been no Apotheke. The new provinces created by conquest in the central, eastern, and southern Balkans ('The West') from the late eighth century onwards knew only the Dromos. The parallelism of the two systems of Apotheke and Dromos is now discernible. Perhaps the Dromos had the potential to be more efficient than the Apotheke at meeting the state's needs though. Perhaps the Apotheke-system was completely in the hands of tax-farmers. The Dromos however was a department of state to which were assigned the revenues and services of groups of tax-payers.⁸⁷ The integration of provision and transportation was thus better assured.

85. See n.73 above for further references regarding chronology. For the various officials of the Genikon see in brief Oikonomides (1972) 313-14.

86. See Zacos-Veglery 1/1, Tables 18/1-20, 22, 23, 25-27, and 29. One seal (Table 19) is of 755/6 (?) or 770/1 (?).

87. A. Stavridou-Zaphraka, 'Η αγγαρεία στο Βυζάντιο', *Βυζαντινά* 11 (1982) 44 and nn. 135 and 138-39.

So to the extent that Kommerkiarioi continued to be the commercial agents of the state and that the Dromos was, or became from the mid eighth century, the organisation principally responsible for the acquisition and redistribution of the materials in which the state/fisc dealt (*e.g.*, taxes in kind, the products of imperial *kouratoreiai*, equipment and provisions for armies and fleets),⁸⁸ the Dromos/Dromos of the West would probably have required the services of Kommerkiarioi as commercial agents during most of its period as a functioning *Cursus Publicus*, and the provincial fiscal administration would have needed to work with such agents too. Indeed the timespan of seals of Kommerkiarioi of the West (early ninth to mid eleventh c.), the chronology of the reconquest of the Balkans, and the chronology of the movement towards fiscal commutation of taxes in kind and other obligations, all indicate such a pattern. It is therefore not strange to find Kommerkiarioi combining responsibility to 'The West' with the 'commerciariate' of particular provinces, examples of which have already been cited.⁸⁹

* * *

The implication is that some Kommerkiarioi worked for the Dromos in the ninth to eleventh centuries in a similar way to that in which they had worked for the Apotheke in the seventh and eighth centuries, whether or not they were formally attached to the Genikon Logothesion — in any case they would have been

88. See Antoniadis-Bibicou, 157-63 for the Kommerkiarios as commercial agent of the state, and 247-55 for Middle Byzantine demonetisation; Hendy, 294-96 and 605-607 for the importance of taxation in kind and of the *Cursus Publicus* in the collection and purchase of primary products (principally grain) even during a period of greater monetisation (the sixth century); *idem*, 607-11 for the Middle Byzantine Dromos as inheritor of these functions (but missing out an 'Apotheke-phase').

89. This interpretation of the use in the ninth through eleventh centuries of the title 'Kommerkiarios of the West', combined or not with specific provinces, does not preclude other meanings for *Dysis* in other branches of the administration, fiscal and military, at these and other times. *Cf.* for instance seals of high officials of the Skholai of the West (Zacos II, nos. 865 and 1077; Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, no. 1.12) of the 10th and 11th cc., and seals of the 11-12th centuries of 'Khartoularioi of the Genikon Logothesion, of the Arkla of the West', *vel sim.* (Laurent II, no. 383(?); Nesbitt-Oikonomides I, nos. 1.4 and 1.8).

helping the Genikon and the state in general *via* Apotheke and then Dromos to achieve its fiscal and logistical goals. Equally the implication is that other Kommerkiarioi, from the 890s when Zaoutzes was Logothetes of the Dromos if not earlier, were assigned to the supervision and taxation of foreign trade at permitted stations as agents of the Dromos, the department which dealt with foreigners. It would be natural if Kommerkiarioi who already worked ('farmed?')⁹⁰ for the Dromos in one capacity ('The West'), which involved commercial exchange anyway, were called upon by the Dromos to deal with the growing presence of foreign merchants. It is not difficult to distinguish in the record of the ninth to eleventh centuries between the two kinds of Kommerkiarios. Essentially the first kind are Kommerkiarioi either of a frontier-province (east or west), or of The West, or of The West *and* specific western frontier-provinces. The second kind are Kommerkiarioi of commercial stations — cities, ports, or riverine arteries (though it should not surprise us to find the two kinds very occasionally combined, as in Cyprus and Attaleia, or Thessalonike and the Vardar river: *v.s.*). The fact that the last (early to mid eleventh-century) examples of the *second* kind of Kommerkiarios are, excepting the case of Attaleia, all from the fringes of the Bulgarian state (Thessalonike, Presthlavitz, Dristra, Develtos) is a reminder that with its pacification in the early eleventh century, and with progress towards fiscal commutation, some of the reasons for appointing Kommerkiarioi proposed here would no longer have applied. The trade of the Bulgarian markets was no longer 'foreign'; pacification would have reduced the need for war-related taxation in kind; and commutation would have removed the fisc and its agents from dealing in primary products.

90. Note the survival of the term *kommerkion* in the sense of tax-farm in the formula *comerchium angariae*, the 'farm' of the fiscally commuted *angaria* of Chios in 1413. I take this reference from M. Balard, 'The Genoese in the Aegean (1204-1566)', in *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean after 1204*, eds. B. Arbel-B. Hamilton-D. Jacoby (London 1980) 170. The apparent conflict with the Kletorologion of Philotheos of 899 AD, which attaches Kommerkiarioi to the Genikon (*v.s.*), should not surprise us in the light of recent research showing the mobility of officials and the fluidity of institutions: see F. Winkelmann, *Byzantinische Rang- und Ämterstruktur im 8. und 9. Jahrhundert* (Berlin 1985), and J. Haldon's review, in *BS* 47 (1986) 229-232.

These Kommerkiarioi would have been 'downgraded' on the basis already suggested.

So it is suggested (for there is no proof, given the nature of the data) that a new insight into the Middle Byzantine state's responses to the *economic* 'Dark Age' (of this one may speak), and to a later revival of markets and monetisation, is to be gained from a juxtaposition of the chronological and geographical references of seals of the Apotheke or Kommerkia, and of Kommerkiarioi (Middle Byzantine), with those of seals of the Dromos, some seals of 'The West', and of the incontrovertible archaeological evidence of very low levels of monetisation and exchange in the seventh to ninth centuries in the provinces; a juxtaposition which suggests that Middle Byzantine Kommerkiarioi, the Apotheke, and the Dromos were firstly part of a response to economic decline and to the problems of meeting relatively high levels of demand for a whole range of primary and secondary products on the part of a relatively sophisticated state from that 'Dark-Age' economy revealed by the excavation of even functionally privileged provincial settlements. The chronological and geographical reference-points then suggest that, as the economic situation began to change in the ninth century, one of the state's responses was to redirect *some* Kommerkiarioi to the new foci of long-distance traffic (essentially to foci of foreign marine or riverine traffic), perhaps by virtue of a position which the Kommerkiarioi had already gained in internal networks of exchange. But the reference-points also suggest that many other Kommerkiarioi had to be appointed in the newer frontier-provinces to operate rather as their 'Dark-Age' predecessors had. Only some Kommerkiarioi, some of the time, represent a fiscal response to a flourishing commerce, and only to a particular aspect of it. Most are a sign of low levels of commercialisation in the provinces concerned, and a sign of the absence of commutation either of taxation or of compulsory purchase, *corvée*, or military service, until, that is, the eleventh century.

A recognition of how far-reaching the Middle Byzantine state's response to a provincial economic 'Dark Age' needed to be involves looking again at certain incidents of fiscal history. For instance what does it really mean to say that Constantine V was

hoarding specie in 769 AD, forcing grain to be sold cheaply for tax-paying purposes? Does this really indicate, as has been suggested,⁹¹ the remonetisation of taxation? Does this really mean that peasants in the interior of Anatolia were selling little sacks of grain? Or could it mean that the treasury lowered the monetary value which it attached to the primary products accepted from fiscal agents (tax-farmers selling, or officials delivering, to imperial granaries or other appropriate places), thus forcing primary producers to hand over more of them? It would be a logical step to take at a time of good harvests, and would explain the reference to the abundance of grain-supplies in Constantinople. More generally, the sigillography, numismatics, and settlement-archaeology of given regions need to be studied in a closer conjunction than has yet been achieved, if the economic changes of the seventh to ninth centuries are to be understood.

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Abbreviations

Antoniadis-Bibicou	H. Antoniadis-Bibicou, <i>Recherches sur les douanes à Byzance: l'octava, le 'kommerkion' et les commerciaux</i> (Paris 1963).
Antoniadis-Bibicou, 'Liste'	'Liste de sceaux de commerciaux', Antoniadis-Bibicou, 225-238.
Dunn	A. Dunn, 'The Byzantine and Frankish lead seals from the American excavations at Corinth: 1925-1990 (I), <i>Hesperia</i> (in press).
Haldon	J. Haldon, <i>Byzantium in the seventh century. The transformation of a culture</i> (Cambridge 1990).
Harvey	A. Harvey, <i>Economic expansion in the Byzantine empire 900-1200</i> (Cambridge 1989).
Hendy	M. Hendy, <i>Studies in the Byzantine monetary economy c. 300-1450</i> (Cambridge 1985).
Laurent, II	V. Laurent, <i>Le Corpus des sceaux de l'empire byzantin</i> , II, <i>L'administration centrale</i> (Paris 1981).
Nesbitt-Oikonomides, I	J. Nesbitt-N. Oikonomides, <i>Catalogue of Byzantine seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art</i> (Washington, D.C. 1991).

91. See Oikonomides, *art. cit.* n.12, 10 for this idea. For accounts of Constantine V's hoarding, by Patriarch Nikephoros and by Theophanes, see Hendy, 298-99.

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